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SECURITY INFORMATION

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O F F I C E O F N A T I O N A L E S T I M A T E S

23 July 1952

STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 258

S U B J E C T: Implications of French Proposal for a European Political Authority

1. The pending French proposal to create a European political authority representing the six Schuman Plan and EDC countries is a major new European development, which will almost certainly have great impact both on the evolving pattern of European integration and, more immediately, on the prospects for ratification of the EDC and contractual accords.

2. Background. Following World War II, the movement toward European integration received strong impetus as a result of: (a) the changed world power situation which highlighted the individual weaknesses of the European nations; and (b) the resultant US pressure for integration in recognition of this fact. Almost inevitably military and economic moves toward integration, through NATO, EDC, the Schuman Plan, and OEEC, have developed more fully than have political ties. Moreover, functional integration for specific, limited purposes among smaller groups of countries has proved more immediately practicable than ceding political sovereignty to a super government. Because of UK reluctance to go much beyond traditional treaty relationships, the most far-reaching steps toward such integration have taken place on a continental basis, without the UK.

3. While the UK did participate in the one major step toward purely political cooperation in the postwar period - the creation of the Council of Europe (CE) in 1949 - the very presence of the UK and the like-minded Scandinavian states has prevented this institution from becoming the nucleus of a European federation. So long as these

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countries participate in and exercise a veto over CE actions, the present desire for political unity on the part of the major continental powers, France, Italy, and West Germany, cannot be realized through this means. Though the CE has functioned as a forum for discussion of European problems and as a symbol of European unity, these major continental powers are convinced that it cannot serve as a framework for political unification.

4. Consequently when the UK, in an effort to demonstrate its interest in European integration, proposed this spring that such functional authorities as the Schuman Plan and EDC be brought under the umbrella of the CE, the major continental powers were somewhat concerned. The Assembly of the CE recognized the desirability of some over-all political authority and proposed that steps be taken in this direction either through the Schuman Plan and EDC mechanisms or through the CE.

5. The French Proposal. The French Government itself has been under pressure to devise further steps toward political unity, particularly because of Socialist insistence on progress in this direction as a prerequisite to their approval of the EDC. Thus, on 4 June the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly called on the French Government to join with the other Schuman Plan and EDC countries in moving toward European political unification.

6. France now proposes to seek agreement from the other Schuman Plan countries to commence negotiations on a six-power European political authority as an alternative to the British proposal for action through the Council of Europe. The French apparently believe that by limiting this authority to the Schuman Plan countries, they can secure agreement to endow it with real, though limited powers, something that would not be possible under the CE. The tentative French program is as follows:

- a. The Foreign Ministers of the six countries would give the Schuman Plan Assembly a mandate to draft a treaty. According to French thinking this Assembly could be set up toward the end of August and might be composed of the same delegates which attended the Council of Europe from the six Schuman Plan countries.

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- b. The treaty would be submitted as soon as possible for approval and signature of the governments and for subsequent parliamentary approval by the six countries.
- c. The European political structure would have a common parliament, a common executive, and a common court, with real but limited powers. The executive would initially have authority at least over the Schuman Plan and EDC communities. The draft treaty would also propose a capital for a US of Europe.
- d. As an immediate objective of French policy, direct elections to the European parliament would be held before the German national elections some time in 1953.

7. French Motives in Proposing a European Political Authority. French sentiment in favor of some form of European political unification continues to be strong. Although there are differences in emphasis, this sentiment runs through all parties from the Gaullists to the Socialists. Thus, by proposing a European political authority, the present government undoubtedly hopes to broaden its present base of support, at least on foreign policy issues, to include the Socialists and at least a segment of Gaullist followers.

8. France's support of European integration springs largely from the French desire to prevent the revival of a strong nationalist Germany. The French Government probably views a European political authority as another means, parallel to the Schuman Plan and EDC in the economic and military spheres, of placing limits on German freedom of action and thus helping to resolve French fears. A West Germany whose main political decisions were subject to French veto, for example, might find it difficult to engage in a strong irredentist policy toward the East. That French motives are in large part influenced by the German problem is indicated by the French suggestion that elections to the six-power parliament be held before the German elections of 1953.

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9. There is also some possibility that the new French proposals are designed as a delaying action to postpone ratification of the EDC. Thus the French might hope to submerge and postpone further consideration of the EDC until negotiations on the political authority had been completed, or even until the treaty was signed and possibly ratified. Evidence in support of this hypothesis includes: (a) the fact that the French proposal is supported by the EDC's opponents as well as its proponents; and (b) a recently reported interview in which Premier Pinay appeared anxious to separate the EDC from rather than to link it with the proposed European political authority. However, it is more likely that the French Government is serious in advocating the establishment of a supranational European political authority and hopes by this means to facilitate rather than to postpone ratification of the EDC. US Embassy Paris favors this interpretation and notes in support of it that Pinay is actively maneuvering to broaden the parliamentary base of his government, particularly by the inclusion of dissident Gaullists; that his refusal to come out unequivocally in favor of the EDC is a part of this strategy to woo the Gaullists; and finally that the government's proposal for a European political authority has improved the prospects for EDC ratification.

10. Attitudes of UK and of Schuman Plan Countries. The UK reaction to the French proposal appears to be that of scepticism coupled with reluctant approval. Thus the British profess to believe that the French proposals are premature, since public opinion in the Schuman Plan countries is unprepared for such a move. More important, while the British will not attempt to block development of the French idea, they hope that any such political authority will be brought within the framework of the Council of Europe, to which the UK belongs. There is apparently some UK apprehension at the long-range prospect of a new power complex on the continent probably dominated eventually by Germany, which would overshadow the UK.

11. The basic attitudes of the West German, Italian, and Benelux Governments toward a European political authority are likely to parallel their attitudes toward the EDC; that is favorable on the part of West Germany and Italy, and hesitant and critical on the part of the Benelux countries. As in the case of the EDC, the attitude of the British is likely to prove decisive in determining

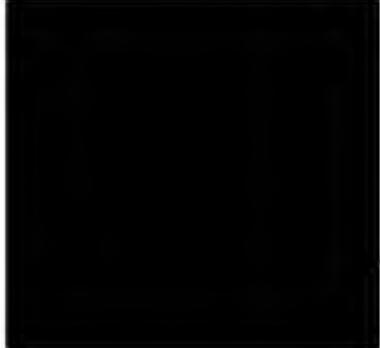
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the positions of the Benelux Governments. They already fear that their national interests will be prejudiced by participation in supranational institutions subject to French or German domination, and, as a consequence, look to the UK to counterbalance a purely continental association.

12. Repercussions of the French Proposal on Early Ratification of the EDC. It is not clear whether the French proposal will entail a delay in ratification of the EDC. The French have not worked out the details or, for that matter, even the important outlines of the political institution which they are advocating. The most which can be said at this time is that opposition to German rearmament remains strong in France; and opposition elements will almost certainly seek to use the French-sponsored project as a pretext for delaying final ratification of the EDC. If such a maneuver is successful, final ratification of the EDC would almost inevitably be delayed long past the end of the year. In addition, the project for a European political community will almost certainly meet with opposition in the Benelux countries. Therefore, if ratification of the EDC is linked in any way with prior agreement on a European political authority, there will probably be a substantial delay in EDC ratification because of the protracted negotiations which would ensue.

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